

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY MAY 9, 2005

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2005–06 REGULAR SESSION

Assembly Concurrent Resolution

No. 58

Introduced by Assembly Member Parra

April 26, 2005

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 58—Relative to foster youth.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL’S DIGEST

ACR 58, as amended, Parra. *Foster youth.*

This measure would recognize that the rights of foster youth are critical to ensuring their well-being and future, and would urge the State Departments of Social Services, Education, *Health Services*, and Mental Health, as well as other designated entities, to develop practices to ~~facilitate making~~ *assist* foster youth ~~aware of in understanding~~ their rights and available resources.

Fiscal committee: yes.

- 1 WHEREAS, Ninety-five thousand foster ~~children~~ *youth* are in
2 care in California. In removing a child from his or her family and
3 placing that child in foster care, the state ~~assumes and counties~~
4 ~~assume~~ enormous responsibility. ~~In effect, Both the state is~~
5 ~~committed and counties commit~~ to protecting ~~the child these~~
6 ~~children~~ and ensuring that ~~the child thrives and develops these~~
7 ~~children thrive and develop~~ the skills, supports, and enduring
8 relationships that will sustain ~~him or her~~ *them* into adulthood;
9 and
10 WHEREAS, Foster youth are uniquely vulnerable, because
11 they are completely dependent on the state to meet their needs,
12 and require additional protection, resources and support to make
13 a successful transition to adulthood; and

1 WHEREAS, The Legislature has recognized the importance of
2 the rights of foster youth by enacting numerous measures to
3 ensure and strengthen those rights, and has further expressed the
4 intent to ensure that the rights of children in out-of-home
5 placement are preserved and not infringed upon; and

6 WHEREAS, The Legislature has recognized the need to
7 expand the foster youth bill of rights to include specific
8 education and higher education rights~~as~~, *noting that* education is
9 the foundation and key to self-sufficiency for many foster youth;
10 and

11 WHEREAS, If members of the child welfare community and
12 the public are unaware of the rights of foster youth, they are
13 unable to meet their collective responsibility to ensure foster
14 youth are cared for and have adequate access to information; and

15 WHEREAS, Foster youth often lack access to information
16 about their rights and available resources in their community.
17 When youth are aware of their rights in foster care, they are able
18 to self-advocate, which is critical to their success. It is necessary
19 that all foster youth know that they have specific rights, and that
20 they know they can call the Office of the State Foster Care
21 Ombudsperson if there is a violation of those rights; and

22 WHEREAS,~~Outreach~~ *Education outreach* by the state and
23 local foster care ombudsperson offices to ~~educate~~ foster youth
24 and~~providers~~ *the child welfare community* needs to be
25 consistently supported~~so~~ *to ensure that* the rights afforded foster
26 youth are meaningful. In recent years, the travel abilities of the
27 Office of the State Foster Care Ombudsperson have been limited
28 due to budget concerns; and

29 WHEREAS, Nearly one in every four calls to the Office of the
30 State Foster Care Ombudsperson~~concern~~'s *reports* a violation of
31 a foster youth's rights. There is a need to expand the scope of the
32 Office of the State Foster Care Ombudsperson to include the
33 ability to independently report to the public and the Legislature
34 regarding the concerns and complaints of foster youth; and

35 WHEREAS, Two promising steps toward the ensuring that
36 foster youth are informed of their rights and have access to the
37 resources needed to be successful are the creation of local foster
38 care ombudsperson offices and the centralization of all resources
39 to foster youth in a "one stop center"; and

1 WHEREAS, ~~Everyone who comes into contact with foster~~
2 ~~youth should make it their duty to~~ *All individuals in the child*
3 *welfare community* share responsibility for ensuring that ~~the~~
4 *foster* youth know their rights and are informed of available
5 education, employment, housing, health, and financial resources;
6 now, therefore, be it

7 *Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate*
8 *thereof concurring,* That the Legislature recognizes that the
9 rights of foster youth are critical to ensuring their well-being and
10 future; and be it further

11 *Resolved,* That the Legislature urges the State Department of
12 Social Services, the State Department of Education, ~~and the State~~
13 *Department of Health Services,* the State Department of Mental
14 Health, the County Welfare Directors Association of *California,*
15 *the National Association of Social Workers,* the California
16 Judicial Council, the California State Foster Parent Association,
17 the California Alliance for Children and Family Services, and the
18 California Chief Probation Officers Association to develop
19 practices that ~~will facilitate making foster youth aware of their~~
20 ~~rights, and of~~ *assist foster youth in understanding their rights and*
21 the resources available to support them both in foster care and as
22 they transition out of the foster care system; and be it further

23 *Resolved,* That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit this
24 resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.